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THE FEDERAL SPOTLIGHT

CIA Adopts New Policy Of Early Retirement

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The Central Intelligence Agency had adopted a policy of retiring its employees at age 60 or 62.

CIA officials said the new policy was adopted to maintain "youth and vigor" in the agency, which is the Government's main intelligence operation. They said it would give younger employees a greater chance of promotion to more important assignments.

Although CIA employees are not under civil service, they are under the civil service retirement system. Civil service retirement rules allow Government employees to remain on the job until age 70. They can stay on longer than 70 if they have fewer than 15 years of service.

However, CIA has authority under law that most other Government agencies don't have in regards to separating employees.

Asked To Retire

Under CIA's new policy, employees who have reached the age of 60 or 62 and have enough years of Federal service to qualify for full retirement benefits are asked to retire.

Thus, CIA employees at age 60 with 30 or more years of Government service face retirement. Employees at age 62 with 15 or more years of Federal service also are subject to CIA's new retirement policy. On reaching 60 or 62, they are called before CIA's new retirement board and asked to retire.

There are some exceptions allowed in cases where an employee's "unique" experience and talents make his continued employment desirable, CIA officials said. Also, employees are allowed to remain past age 60

or 62 until they become eligible for full retirement benefits.

Some Employees Unhappy

Some CIA employees are unhappy over the new policy, declaring that the Government is losing some of its best talents with many years of invaluable service and experience behind them.

CIA officials say they are not "forcing" the employees to retire, but admit they have not yet had any cases where employees asked to retire have not agreed to do so.

CIA is vested with such strong powers to force employees to leave if it has to use them, that employees reaching age 60 or 62 with sufficient years of service apparently have not tried to contest the move to retire them.

CIA officials said the new policy is intended to make room for its younger and most promising employees to advance in the agency. Otherwise, many of its most promising employees will leave to use their talents elsewhere and this would be a blow to national security, they declare.

CIA Held Within Rights

CSC retirement officials said the CIA was within its rights in its new retirement policy because of the various powers given it by Congress in regards to employment policies.

Asked if other Government

departments and agencies have appeal rights to the CSC, etc. This entire process would be too cumbersome for Government agencies to attempt, CSC officials said.

For one thing, it was pointed out, most other Government departments and agencies do not have the summary firing powers that CIA has. Therefore, they could not force employees to retire at 60 or 62 unless, in each individual case, they preferred charges that the employee's work was unsatisfactory. The employees then would

However, there would be nothing to prevent departments and agencies to adopt a policy "encouraging" employees to retire at age 60 or 62 if they were eligible for full retirement benefits, it was conceded. But CSC officials say they know of no such policy being considered by the Kennedy administration.